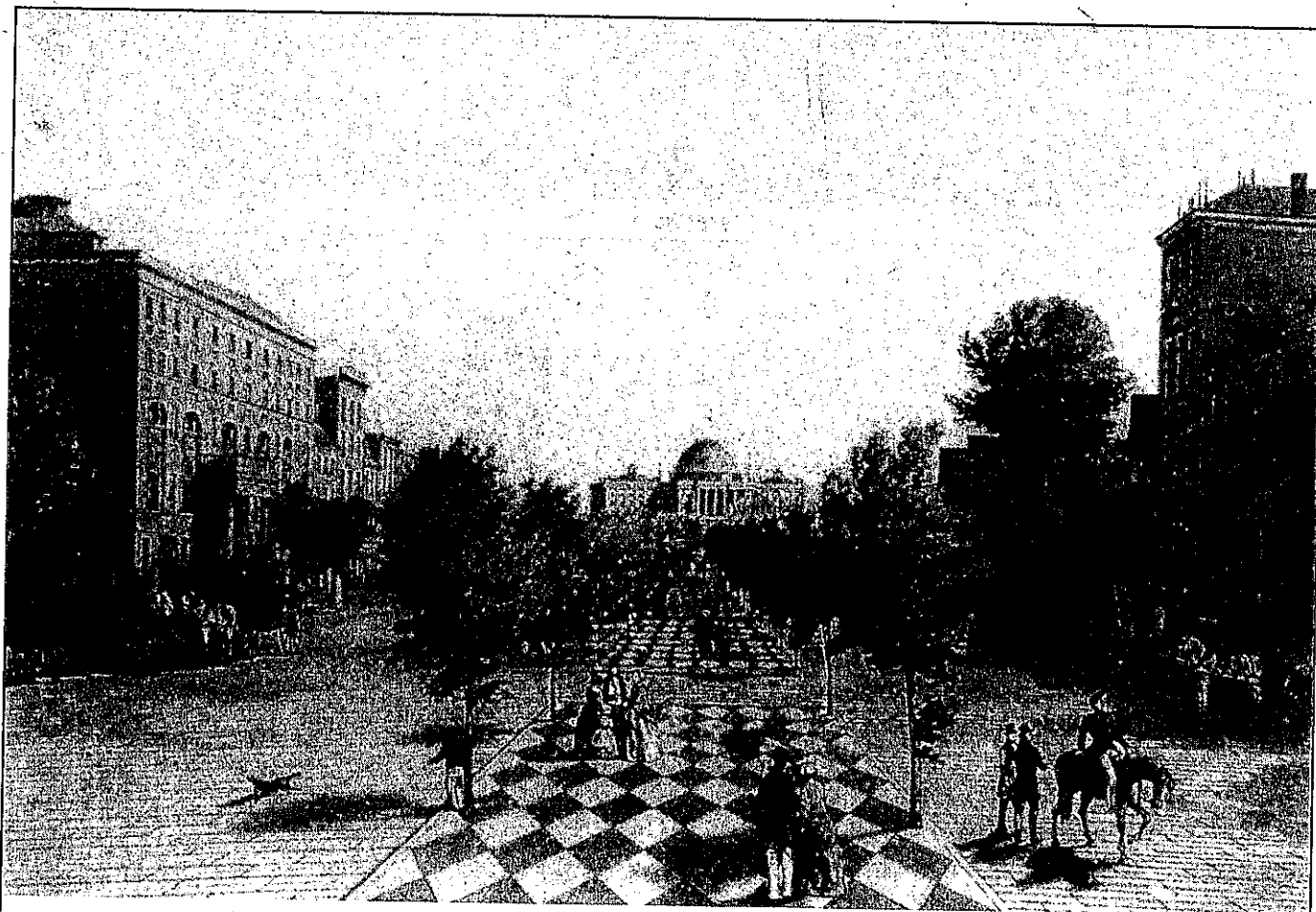
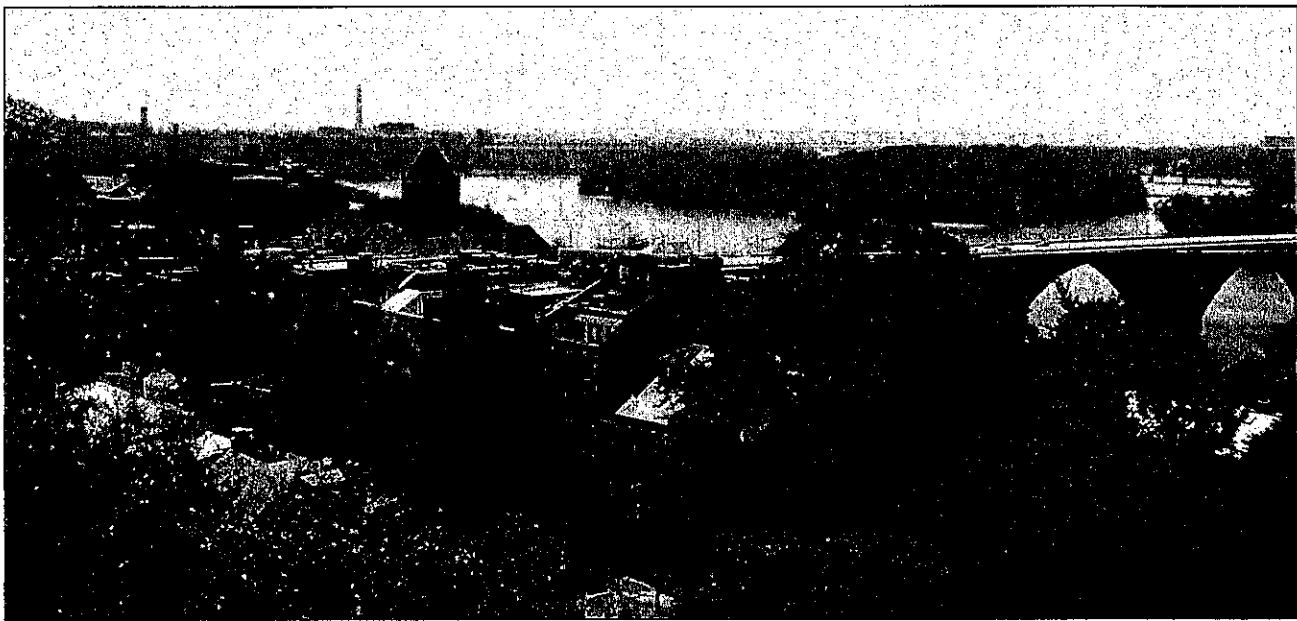


City of Magnificent Intentions

A History of Washington, District of Columbia



Proposed plan for **PAVING PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE** Washington City D. C.
Designed by HORACE P. RUSS, New York



The Potomac River: Then and Now

The Potomac River attracted many people to its banks. The drawing of the river (top) was made during the late 1790s, just after the site was selected as the location for the new

federal capital. The photograph (bottom) shows the river as it looks today. In both the drawing and the photograph the view is looking south.

Birth of the Federal Capital

THE RIVER

The river was here long before people arrived. Season after season it flowed from the mountains to the bay. It drained a large basin, or watershed. Its waters nourished many kinds of fish and other aquatic life. The forests, mountains, and valleys of its region held abundant resources of soil, minerals, and wildlife. These resources would attract a great variety of human communities.


People came to the river valley about 12,000 years ago, although they left little evidence of their lives here. Sites along the river where tributaries joined the larger stream provided convenient places for settlement for these hunters and gatherers. At one site, the river divided with a lesser stream branching off to the east. Here were several important early settlements.

Eventually, one group named the river Potomac. Its lesser tributary was called by some the Eastern Branch, by others the Anacostia River. The Potomac and Anacostia rivers played important roles in the story of this region that would be settled as the nation's capital. These streams continue to influence the lives of people who occupy the place where they meet—the city of Washington, D.C.


• How is the river used today? How do you think it was used in the 1790s?

• In which period would you have preferred to have taken a boat ride on the Potomac River? Why?


BELTZHOVER & CO.'S
SPLENDID LINES
OF "BLUE SAFETY COACHES,"
Between Washington and Baltimore.



1st LINE, 5 o'clock.
 Passengers by this Line arrive in Baltimore by 10 o'clock, consequently in sufficient time for the 12 o'clock Boat for Philadelphia.



2d LINE, 9 o'clock.
Via Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road.
 No delay or stoppage by this Line, and the Cars is always in readiness. Passengers arrive in Baltimore to early dinner.



3d LINE, 2 o'clock.
 Arrives in Baltimore to early supper time, between 6 and 7, P. M.

NATIONAL MUSEUM, AND GALLERY OF FINE ARTS.

THE proprietors most respectfully inform the ladies and gentlemen of this Metropolis, and the public in general, that they have fitted up in a neat and appropriate manner, that spacious building, known as the ROTUNDO, at the corner of 13th street, and Pennsylvania Avenue, as a permanent *Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts;* And is opened for their inspection. The Museum contains Quadrupeds, Birds, Reptiles, Insects, Minerals, Petrifications, Fossils, Shells, Artificial and Natural Curiosities. *Amongst which are:*

- The Arabian Camel,
- The Bengal Tiger, from Africa,
- The Kangaroo,
- The African Ostrich,
- The Bellicose Crane, &c. &c.

S. MATLOCK, Merchant Taylor,
Pennsylvania Avenue, near the corner of 9th street, Washington.

RESPECTFULLY informs his customers and the public that he has received his full supplies of **CLOTHS, CASSIMERES, &c. &c.** Comprising the finest assortment of goods for Gentlemen's wear, ever brought to this city, consisting in part of—

- Blue, Black, Brown, Olive, Drakeneck,
- Invisible Green, Adelaide, Mulberry, Golden Green, Grass Green, Cloths.

• What can you tell about life in Washington from these advertisements in the United States Telegraph issue of January 7, 1832?

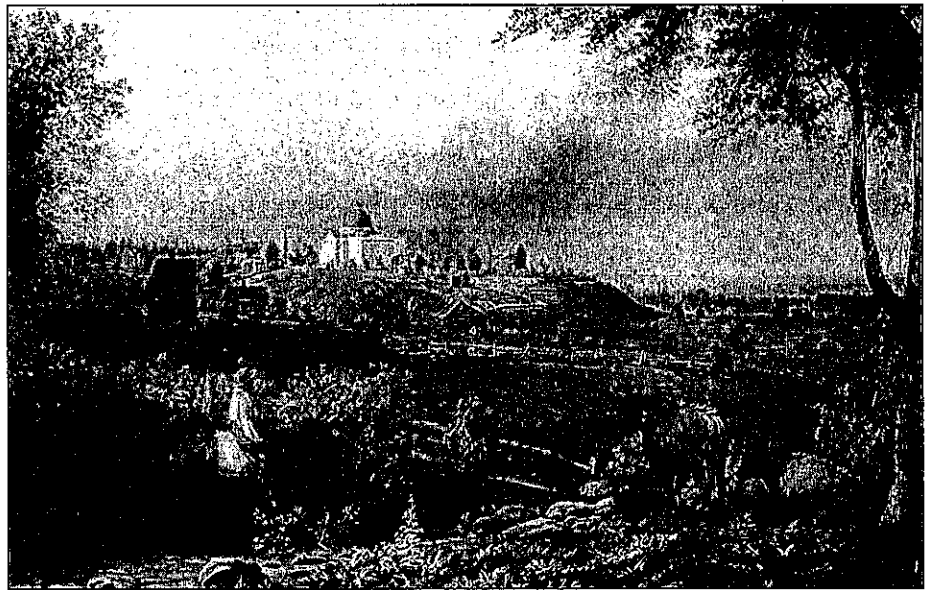
A public market was built in 1801 by the citizens of Washington at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and 7th Street, NW. For many years the spot remained the heart of downtown Washington, and a market stood there until the 1930s.

- *What stands on the place now?*
- *Where do you think the commercial center of Washington, D.C., is today?*



In the first half of the nineteenth century most of the land in the District of Columbia beyond the government buildings remained rural.

- *When do you think most of it became used for residential purposes?*



By 1843, as this photograph looking from the U.S. Capitol toward the White House shows, Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, was already well developed with stores and houses.

- *What changes do you think will take place on the Avenue?*



Early Settlers of the Potomac Region

SUMMARY

Early people of the Potomac region represented three different racial and cultural backgrounds. The first to arrive were the Indians. They were descendants of immigrants from Asia and belonged to many different groups or tribes scattered along the rivers and bays in lands now known as Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. They survived by fishing and hunting the abundant wildlife of the region and later by farming.

English colonists settled at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. From there these Europeans and their descendants spread out, until by 1700 they dominated the Potomac and Tidewater regions. English settlers brought firearms, metal tools and implements, and other devices far in advance of Indian technology. English colonial leaders received land grants from their king for land occupied by Native American tribes. They settled a few towns and many plantations or large farms, where they grew tobacco for export to England. They founded the colonies of Virginia and Maryland and organized county governments, church parishes, courts, and other institutions patterned after those of England.

A third group, black people from West Africa, first arrived at Jamestown in 1619 to be employed as servants and laborers. The Africans brought their own languages and traditions. In desperate need of reliable field workers to cultivate their tobacco, the English planters reduced the Africans to slavery—permanent servitude. Not all black people became slaves, but the majority of Africans brought to America after 1660 were treated as perpetual bondsmen. Despite strong resistance from the slaves themselves, slavery took hold in Virginia and Maryland, and thousands of Africans were imported in the eighteenth century.

1. Native Americans

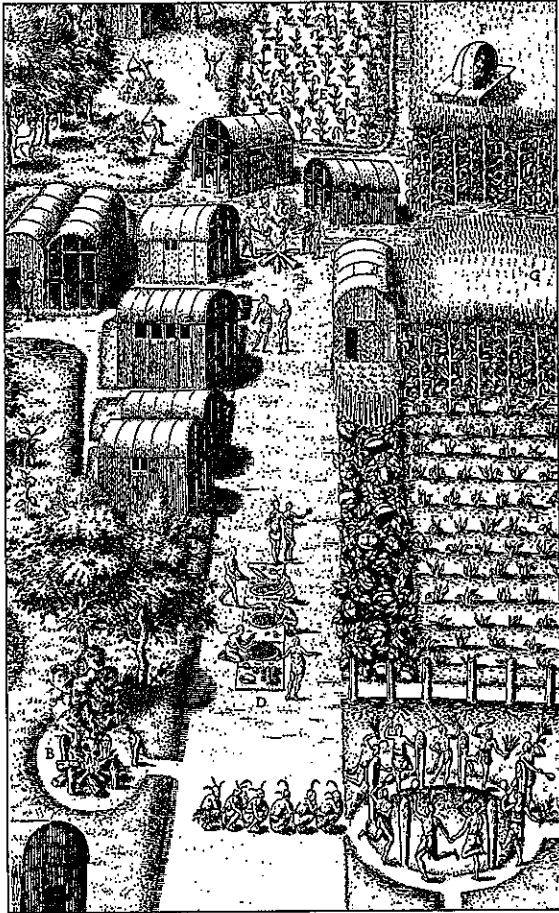
First Settlers of the Potomac Region

The Indians of the Potomac region, like other Native Americans all along the Atlantic coast, lived in the kind of settlements the English referred to as villages or towns. Archaeologists have uncovered traces of several such settlements within the original ten-

Main Ideas in This Chapter

1. Early settlers in the Potomac region represented three cultures—Indian, European, and African. The interaction of these three cultures left a lasting imprint on the area.
2. The early economy of the region depended on agriculture, especially tobacco farming, and slavery became an integral part of this economy.
3. Georgetown and Alexandria were settled as tobacco ports 50 years before the founding of the nation's capital.

- What historical evidence exists about the Indians who lived in the Potomac region?
- How did the Indians living along the Potomac provide for their needs?
- Who was Powhatan, and how did his confederation function?



The Indians living near the Potomac River site of the future nation's capital lived in communities similar to this one, based on a sixteenth-century drawing. John White, who observed the Indians in the area of the Roanoke settlement, made the original on which this engraving by De Bry was based. Entitled "The Town of Secota," it shows buildings, ceremonies, hunting, and gardening. Englishman Thomas Hariot wrote that a watchman, seated in a special covered chair (F), made "continual cryes and noyse" to scare birds and beasts from the crops.

mile-square bounds of the District of Columbia. Nacotchtanke, the largest of the three villages, was spread out along the southeast side of the Anacostia River near the present site of Bolling Air Force Base and Anacostia Park. The people of this important trading community were called "Nacostins" and "Anacostines." The area south and east of the river and the river itself are now called Anacostia, after the first inhabitants.

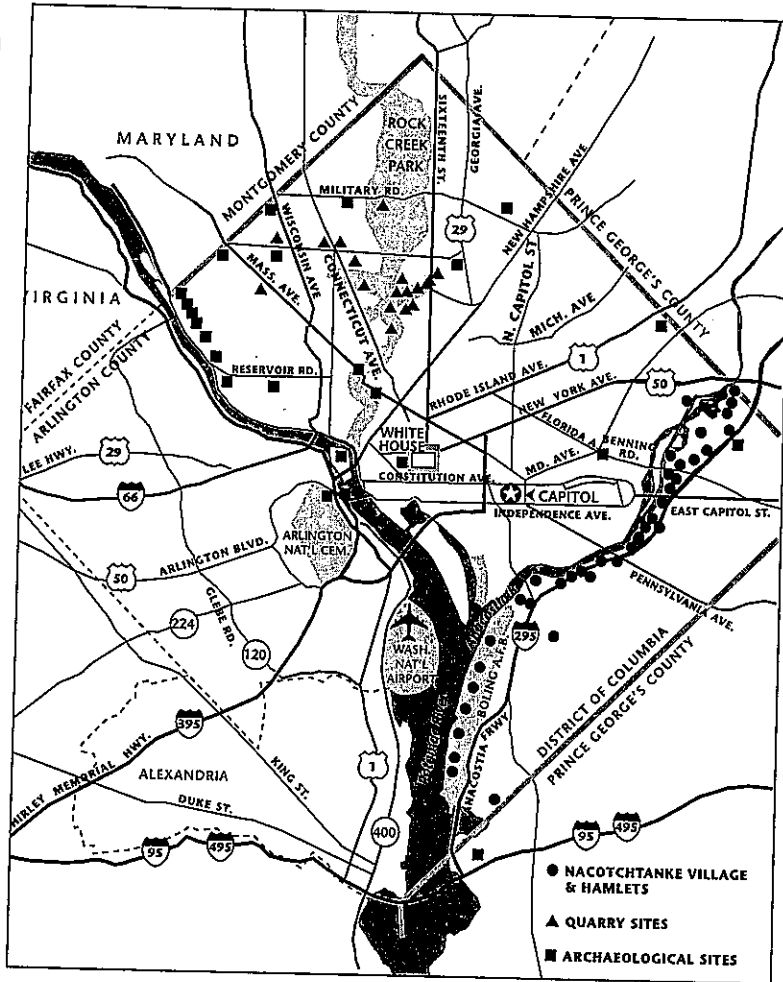
A second Indian town, Nameroughquena, probably stood on the Potomac's west bank opposite the foot of what is now called Theodore Roosevelt Island. The third settlement we know about existed on a narrow bluff between the places where the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and MacArthur Boulevard run today.

Economy and Society

At the time the Europeans came, Indians of the Potomac region were primarily agricultural. They lived by hunting, fishing, and farming. With bow and arrow they hunted deer, turkeys, bears, and other wild animals for meat and hides. They caught fish in nearby waters with spears, nets, and hooks. Most villages had cultivated fields nearby where women tended crops of maize, tobacco, sunflowers, and a variety of vegetables. The women prepared, dried, and stored these provisions in baskets they wove from grasses, in clay pots, and in platters and bowls carved from soft stone and wood. Men made arrowheads and spearheads as well as hand tools and smoking pipes from animal bones and stone. The course of Rock Creek is dotted with sites of Indian quarries and work camps.

The produce of the fields, woods, and waters around Nacotchtanke was great enough to allow its people to trade with other tribes and, later, with English colonists when they came to the area. The Nacostins exchanged their surplus grain and meat or paid in Indian shell money (called "wampum" or "roanoke") for the furs, copper, and bead jewelry of the inland tribes. The English needed the food and wanted the furs obtained by the Nacostins. A flourishing fur trade developed between the Indians and the Europeans.

Although the English called them "savages," the Indians had a highly organized society based on the family and the tribe. Except for chiefs, who sometimes took more than one wife, Indian men and women married one spouse for life. Beyond their families,



At the time of John Smith's exploration of what is now the District of Columbia, the largest and most important Indian village was Nacotchtanke, where the ruler and his kinsmen lived.

• Where did the Nacostins settle? What geographical features determined the location? Are any of the sites near your school?

Indians were members of tribes. These usually were groups consisting of 50 to 60 households living together in two or three villages. For example, the Nacostins lived in at least three villages along the Potomac. Each tribe had an identity as a people, with its accustomed hunting, planting, fishing, and gathering grounds. Succession to be head of the tribe, or chief, was **matrilineal** in many of these groups. That is, the eldest child of the chief's eldest sister would become chief. Women sometimes became chiefs of Indian tribes.

Indian Politics and Beliefs

Tribes competed for hunting grounds and other economic advantages, as well as for power and influence. Tribes often allied themselves with other tribes to gain protection from or aid in making war against enemies. One such combination of tribes, headed



An Indian hunter, painted by John White



An Indian woman and her daughter, painted by John White

by the great chief Powhatan, embraced the native peoples of the easternmost lands penetrated by the James, York, Rappahannock, and Potomac rivers when the English arrived there. Powhatan counted among his allies several dozen tribes numbering 8,000 to 9,000 people. The tribes' chiefs pledged their allegiance to Powhatan with a yearly payment of grain or other produce. They followed his lead in matters of war, trade, and justice.

Indians north of the Potomac River were not members of Powhatan's Confederation. They were under pressure from him, however, and from other powerful tribal alliances to the north. Villages such as Nacotchtanke were threatened by other Indian groups. The Nacostins hoped to form an alliance with the English against Powhatan, and when English colonists wished to engage in trade, they found the Nacostins very friendly. It was a fortunate advantage for the English. For the Indians it was not so fortunate. Because of political conflicts among the different tribal groupings, the Native Americans could not present a united front to the European invaders.

Indians of the Potomac region had beliefs and practices which the English found difficult to understand. For example, Indian views of property were completely misunderstood by the English. The Indians did not recognize individual rights of private property. Land for cultivation and hunting was held by the community as a whole for its use and subsistence. When Indians "sold" their land, they were being hospitable. They intended to share the land with other common users. When the English "bought" Indian land and paid for it, they supposed they would then occupy and use it individually and exclusively. Because both parties had totally different ideas about property rights, centuries of quarreling and bloodshed followed.

2. The English Invasion

When the English arrived in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, they were latecomers to colonizing in the New World. The Jamestown settlement was funded by the Virginia Company of London. Its shareholders hoped to capture instant wealth, but they were not at first sure how to acquire this in the New World. Some went looking for gold and found nothing. Others thought that trans-Atlantic trade in silk, wine, or furs would make their fortunes. The adventurers were not prepared to engage in hard, physical labor.



THE THREE SISTERS

Native Americans had great respect for nature. They believed that supernatural forces lived in the forest, the rain, the wind, and certain animals.

A GHOST STORY

There is an old Indian legend about the three rocks jutting out of the Potomac River just above Key Bridge. According to the story, these rocks, called the Three Sisters, are three Indian maidens who drowned trying to avenge the deaths of their Indian braves. Do they cast a spell over the area? Decide for yourself.

The tale begins at least 100 years before the time Europeans first settled in America. An Indian village in Virginia was surrounded by its enemies. Its people were starving. The chief decided to lead his warriors out of the village in search of food. It was a dangerous mission. The chief refused to let his three sons go because they were too young. The young men decided to prove their bravery by catching some fish in the Potomac. They would use the fish to feed the village until the warriors returned.

After a short while, the three young men were attacked. They were killed by an enemy scouting party, in full view of their village and the three young maidens who loved them.

The three young maidens, the beautiful daughters of the medicine men, decided to cross the river. Using the powers of their father's medicine they would take revenge on the enemy. They made a simple raft of logs and set out across the river. But the winds were too strong and the current carried them downstream

toward the sea. Seeing they would not reach their goal, they clasped their arms around each other and shouted a curse. If they, daughters of a most powerful medicine man, could not cross the river at this point, no one would ever cross there again. They jumped into the river and joined their loved ones in death. That night a wild storm came upon the river. When the sun rose in the morning, three granite boulders rose from the river where there had been none before.

Does the curse remain to this day? Metropolitan Harbor Police report that many fishermen, canoeists, and swimmers have died crossing the river at that point. Old rivermen report hearing mournful cries near this place during storms, a sign that the curse of the Three Sisters would soon claim another victim.

In the early 1970s, the city intended to build the Three Sisters Bridge across the Potomac at the site. A wild storm in 1972 swept away the bridge framework engineers had begun to build at the site. Anti-freeway organizations and environmentalists opposed and finally defeated the bridge. Still, those who remembered the Indian legend wonder about the curse of the Three Sisters.

—From "The Curse of the Three Sisters," from *Washington's Most Famous Ghost Stories*, by John Alexander

- Why did the English come to the area around the Potomac River?
- How did the rise of the tobacco culture affect the economy of the area?



Captain John Smith and his party sailed up the Potomac River, probably to Little Falls. Near the site of present-day Washington, they found friendly Indians who were willing to trade with them. Smith wrote in his diary about catching fish that the fish were "lying so thicke with their heads above the water, as for want of nets (our barge driving amongst them) we attempted to catch them with a frying pan: but we found it a bad instrument to catch fish with: neither better fish, more plenty, nor more variety for smal fish, had any of us ever seene in any place so swimming in the water, but they are not to be caught with frying pans." (The spellings are common to the time of John Smith.)

Several circumstances helped to save the Jamestown settlement. Occasionally, when the colonists were on the brink of starvation, ships arrived from England to resupply them. Leadership from one of their number, Captain John Smith, led the colonists to explore the Potomac River and discover the friendly Indians at Nacotchtanke. From these native people the English obtained food and information about the Potomac region. Smith and a handful of other practical colonists decided that the future of their outpost would not depend on the sudden discovery of gold but on such pursuits as trading, farming, and manufacturing.

The Virginia colony was also saved, in part, by tobacco. The broad-leafed plant was cultivated and used by the Indians, but according to one early settler, Virginia tobacco was "poor and weak, and of a biting taste." John Rolfe, a settler at Jamestown, obtained seeds from the Spanish, planted them in Virginia, and shipped a dried crop to England in 1613. Soon the plant was growing in every open field and even in the streets of Jamestown. Two thousand pounds of the golden weed were exported in 1615. In 1620, 40,000 pounds went out; in 1626, 500,000 pounds; and in 1629, the incredible figure of 1.5 million pounds was reached.

Strengthening the Colony

Tobacco alone did not save the Virginia colony. The colony's leaders at first correctly doubted the wisdom of having every settler growing the same crop and neglecting other work needed to keep the economy going. They encouraged fishing and the production of goods such as lumber, wine, iron, salt, and glass. They also promoted an increased migration of workers from England to Virginia by offering 50 acres of land, a **headright**, to every person who paid his own or someone else's way to Virginia. Trade and peaceful relations with the Indians were also encouraged.

In 1619, the Virginia Company took two other steps toward strengthening its colony. A shipload of unmarried women departed England to encourage the colonists to marry, have children, and begin families. In the same year the company ordered that each settlement in the colony elect two "burgesses," or representatives, to assemble at Jamestown annually and help make laws for the colony. Though the elected assembly's powers were limited, it did serve to give the settlers a greater stake in the community. Men



Growing tobacco and exporting it was one of the ways the Jamestown colony was saved. This drawing appeared on a map of Virginia and Maryland in 1751.

- What does it tell us about the tobacco society in 1751? Notice all the details in the picture.

with wives, children, land, and a say in how they were governed began to think of Virginia as home.

The efforts of the Virginia Company stabilized the colony and encouraged its growth. But growth and tobacco cultivation increased the need for land. Three years of tobacco growing used up the soil's fertility, and planters needed to move on to fresh land. The company also required land to offer new settlers as headrights. As the colony grew in the 1620s, it spread along the James River and its neighboring waterways. There seemed to be no limits to its capacity to expand.

The Defeat of the Indians

The new lands being cleared and planted by the English had been occupied for centuries by the Indians. Sometimes Native Americans agreed to sell their land to the newcomers, but in selling they did not intend to give up possession. An uneasy peace existed between the two peoples. In 1622, this peace was shattered when violence swept Tidewater Virginia and the Potomac region.

Opechancanough, Powhatan's heir, determined to wipe out the English colony before it grew too large. On Good Friday morning, March 22, scores of English plantations were surprised and overrun. When Opechancanough's warriors retired from their attack, almost one-third of the 1,200 white settlers were dead. The English struck back. Two years of warfare, disastrous to the Indians, followed. After the capture and death of Opechancanough, the

- How did the English deal with the Indians after defeating them?

tribes that had not been wiped out or driven away were compelled to make peace. By the peace of 1646, the tribes of Powhatan's Confederation agreed that their lands were held at the pleasure of the King of England. They were forbidden upon pain of death to enter any part of the peninsula that lay below the falls of the James and York rivers. The colonial governor had a veto over the tribes' choice of chiefs.

English settlement pushed quickly up the rivers after the peace of 1646. The Indians, who now numbered only about one-quarter of those who had lived in Virginia's Tidewater region when the English arrived, were too weak to resist. Many had perished in the long struggle; some had been removed to distant lands set aside by the English, or, like the residents of Nacotchtanke, had retreated into the vast western forests. English firearms and unity were more than the Indians could withstand.

3. Out of Africa

The Need for Labor

Both land and labor in generous amounts were needed for profit from the growing of tobacco. Following the Indians' defeat, land became abundant and easily obtained. It proved more difficult, however, to find the hands necessary to raise tobacco. Cultivation of the crop was a complex task requiring arduous hand labor. Food, clothing, and shelter also had to be provided for planters' families and laborers. The need for workers increased still more with the settlement of another colony, Maryland, in 1634. The new colony, which was north of the Potomac River, developed a tobacco-based economy similar to that of Virginia.

The two colonies first met their need for labor through **indentured servitude**. Through this means, a person sold his or her labor for a certain term of years to another person in return for transportation, food, clothing, shelter, and often, education. A written contract, called an indenture, gave the master almost total power over the servant and protected certain rights of the servant. The indentured servant gained complete freedom at the end of his or her term of service. It appears that as many as three-quarters of the English people who migrated to Virginia and Maryland in the seventeenth century came as indentured servants.

• How was the tobacco economy related to the coming of Africans to the area?

• Why did slavery become the most profitable form of labor for the tobacco plantations?

Slavery

There were Africans in Virginia and Maryland almost from the beginning of the colonies. In 1619, a Dutch ship dropped anchor off Point Comfort, where the James River flows into the Chesapeake Bay. Its captain had "20 and odd Negroes" aboard, taken as plunder from the Spanish West Indies. He needed supplies for his vessel and Virginia needed workers. So a deal was struck and an exchange made: supplies were traded for human beings. These first black people in Virginia came as indentured servants, like many English workers, to serve for a specific period of time.

Between 1620 and 1660, however, this system was altered. Gradually the planters found that extending the term of service for their black laborers would be economically advantageous. Black servants began to be purchased to serve a lifetime rather than a limited period. And the children of these workers also became the property of their owners for life. Thus indentured servitude for black people evolved into slavery. By being "different" in skin color and cultural background, the Africans and their descendants were subjected to permanent bondage. An increase in tobacco prices after 1660 and the migration to Virginia and Maryland of a number of wealthy gentlemen increased the demand for laborers.

As long as white men and women continued to come in large numbers and were relatively cheap to buy and keep, they were the preferred form of labor on tobacco plantations. But slave labor was more productive in the long run than white labor, because the slave worked for the term of his life while the servant was the master's for only five or seven years. Slave women were routinely made to work in the fields, while servant women were not. The importation of slaves from Africa and the West Indies into Virginia and Maryland reached flood proportions during the first 50 years of the eighteenth century. By 1770 more than 40 percent of the population was African American.

Slave Codes

As the population of black people grew, the courts and legislatures of the Virginia and Maryland colonies enacted codes that stripped the slaves of any rights and reduced them to the status of property. The slave codes precisely defined the status of the slave, reserving it for black persons only, and spelled out an elaborate system of slave control. As early as the 1640s in Virginia, black peo-

◦ *How did the slave codes and other legal restrictions affect the lives of Africans, free and slave, in Maryland and Virginia?*

President George Washington was one of the tobacco planters in Virginia, and his plantation at Mount Vernon is a reminder of what life was like in Virginia in the eighteenth century. The picture on the top shows him with his wife, Martha, and their two young wards. The map on the table is of Pierre L'Enfant's plan for the nation's capital. The picture on the bottom shows Washington in the fields.

- Write brief entries for an encyclopedia about what life was like for each of the people shown in these pictures.



ple were forbidden to own guns, and black servants were given harsher punishment than their white counterparts. Under codes written in the 1660s, slavery was lifelong and the child of any slave woman, regardless of the father's color or condition, would be a slave.

Through a series of **enactments** in the 1680s and 1690s, black people in Virginia and Maryland lost their rights to testify in court, to have a jury trial, to own property, or to take part in commercial activities. The rights of groups to meet in public places, of individuals to travel about, and of couples to marry and have legitimate children were all severely reduced. Previous restrictions on a master's right to punish his slaves were set aside. His right to **manu-**

mit, or free, his slaves was limited by requirements that freed black people leave the colony in six months and that manumissions be approved by colonial authorities. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, slavery was an established legal institution in Maryland and Virginia.

Resistance to Slavery

Africans and later generations of African Americans did not accommodate easily to suppression. Their techniques of resistance were varied and often subtle. Hundreds of slaves ran away and were never recaptured. Successful escapees had to take dangerous chances, but freedom was worth the risks. Eighteenth-century newspapers in the southern colonies carried many advertisements for runaway slaves. The majority of enslaved people resisted the system while working within it by deliberately delaying tasks ("the slowdown"), making frequent mistakes, feigning illness, breaking tools, and talking back to or even being violent toward their overseers.

Some slaves resisted their condition directly and forcefully by rebelling, committing acts of sabotage, or engaging in crime. Organized rebellions occurred infrequently in colonial America, although several slave conspiracies were uncovered before their accomplishment. For example, a group of slaves plotting to capture Annapolis in 1740 were prevented from carrying out their plans. Restlessness and discontent among slaves inspired such fear among the slaveowners that repression and punishment of **conspiracies** were terribly severe.

By learning crafts or gaining expertise, some slaves gained the confidence of their masters and acquired privileges. By making themselves particularly valuable in this way, they could expand their range of choices. A skilled craftsperson might be hired out to work away from the plantation and earn good wages for the master and might possibly purchase freedom.

Free Black Population

The most clear alternative to slavery—freedom—was not available to more than a small number of black people in colonial Virginia and Maryland. Nevertheless, some families had been free since their arrival in America and others gained freedom by manumission or purchase—they bought themselves or others.

Free Black Population and Slave Population in Maryland and Virginia			
State	Year	Free Black Population	Slaves
Maryland	1755	1,817	45,301
	1790	8,043	100,000 +
Virginia	1795	13,000	290,000

Free black people did not enjoy the same rights as other free people. They could not vote or appear in court against white people. They were often treated unfairly, but nearly every person, free or not, cherished freedom and hoped to achieve it.

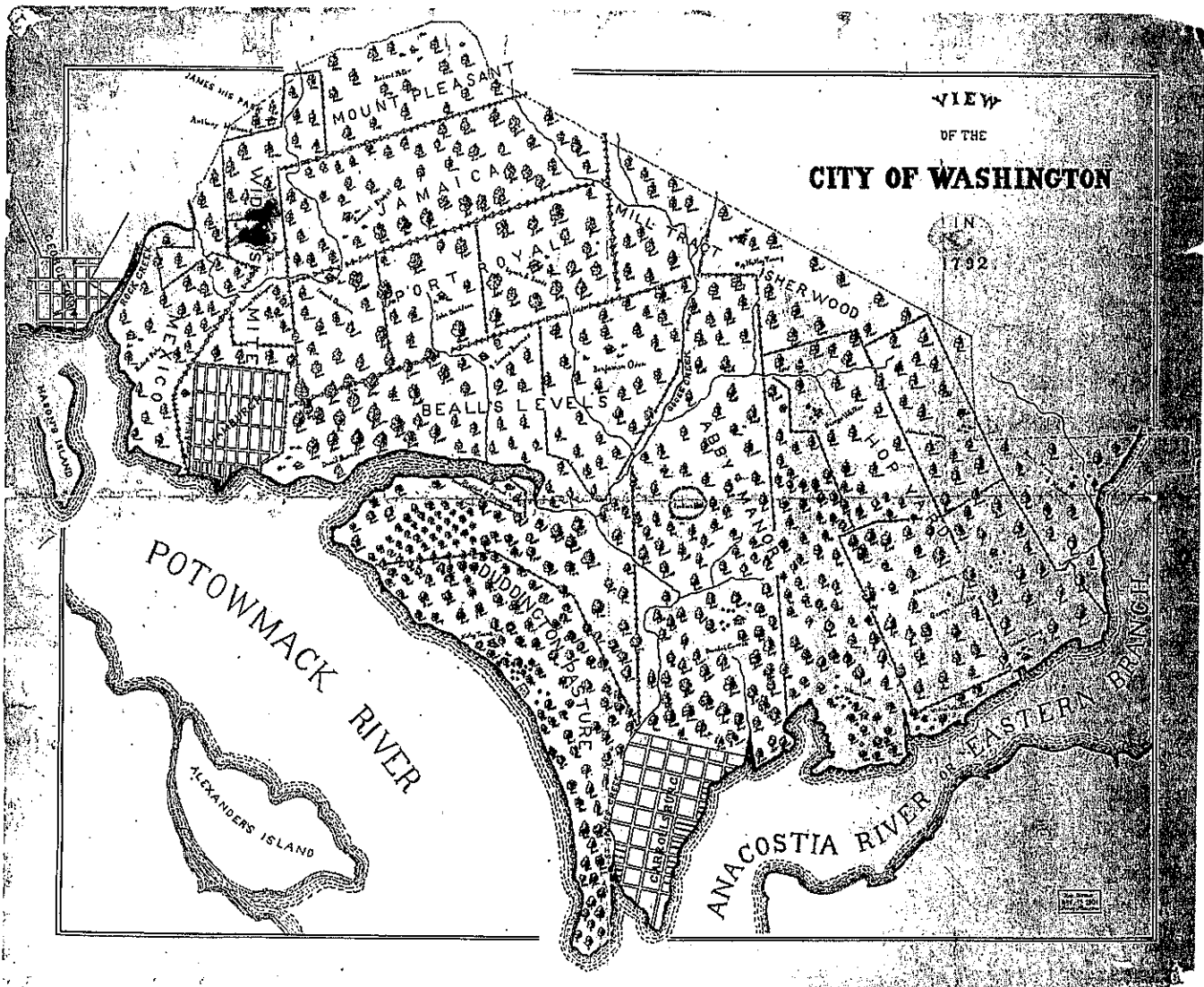
4. The Colonial Legacy

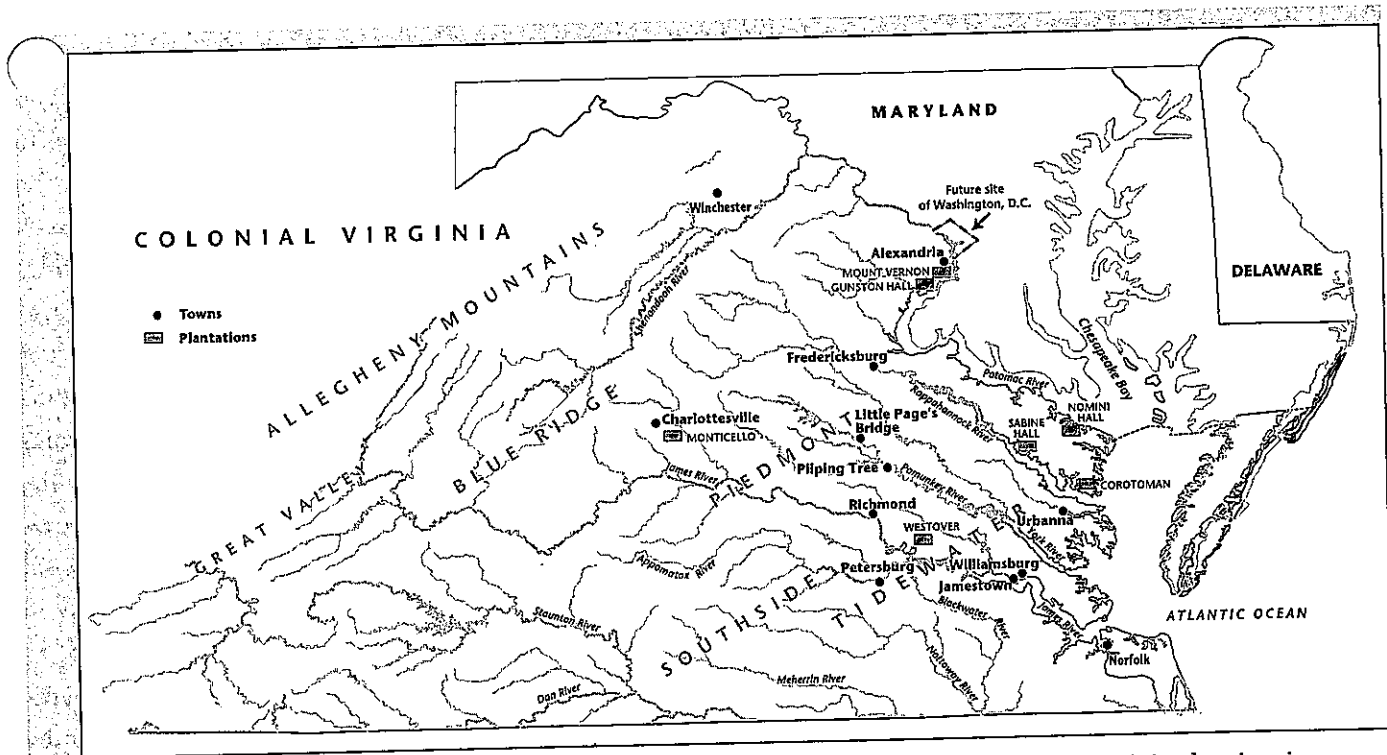
English Settlement of the Potomac Region

A map drawn 100 years later suggests land ownership patterns about 1792. These plantations existed before the area was called the District of Columbia.

- *Imagine that you are standing on Jenkins Hill, located in the Abby Manor plantation; what would you see?*
- *Find Georgetown; why was it important to the area?*

As Virginia's colonial population grew, it spread steadily into the region's many inlets, rivers, and creeks. These waterways, besides being the area's main avenues of travel and trade, opened up the interior to settlers and dispersed people over the land. Planters developed scattered plantations and found little use for towns.





A map of the colony of Virginia, showing rivers, towns, and plantations

Land along the lower Potomac River began to fill up in the 1650s.

1660, a few wealthy and powerful people had been granted most of the land along the Virginia side of the river below the falls. On the Maryland side a similar scramble for new tobacco fields went on. Where the Indians of Nacotchtanke had formerly lived, fished, and traded, new owners laid out plantations with names like "Blue Plains" and "St. Elizabeth." Elsewhere within the present boundaries of the District of Columbia, plantations called "Duddington," "Jamaica," and "Widow's Mite" were established between 1660 and 1710.

• Locate Jamestown and the James, York, and Potomac rivers.

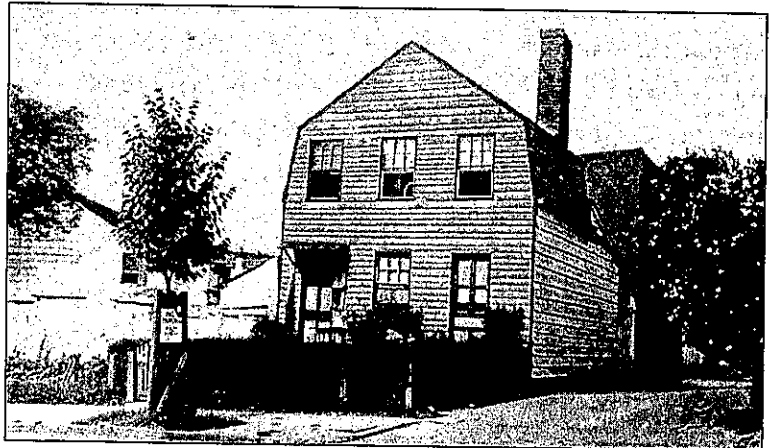
By the middle of the eighteenth century, Prince George's and Frederick (from which Montgomery County was later carved) counties in Maryland and Fairfax County in Virginia were settled tobacco communities. In these counties the principal unit of settlement was the plantation. Colonial leaders, their families, and their slaves lived and worked on tobacco plantations. Some plantations were large, containing 1,000 acres and more. A few landowners controlled as many as a dozen plantations. The ordinary planter or **freeholder** owned 200 to 400 acres and one, two, or even four servants and slaves. His wealthier neighbor might have 20 to 50 slaves working one plantation.

- *Why did Alexandria and Georgetown prosper?*

Alexandria and Georgetown

As the Potomac region's tobacco economy and culture developed, towns became necessary. Tobacco planters needed places to bring their crops for inspection, storage, and shipment after the harvest. In 1730, the colony of Virginia made the Hunting Creek Warehouse a public landing and warehouse. Just seven miles upstream, on the Maryland side of the Potomac, another warehouse and inspection station opened in about 1740. Small settlements soon grew up around the two warehouses. On the Virginia side a ferry landing was opened and a few houses and stores appeared. Among the earliest residents of the Virginia landing were three young Scottish tobacco agents who called the settlement Belhaven, after one of Scotland's national heroes. Upriver at the Maryland warehouse, Scotsmen also arrived. That place, in fact, was commonly called New Scotland during its early years.

Less than 20 years after their appearance, these settlements were organized as towns. In 1748, the Virginia assembly granted the petition of the tobacco merchants and their planter associates to create "a Town at Hunting Creek Warehouse on Potomack River." The town was to be called Alexandria, for Philip and John Alexander, owners of the land where the town would be located. Alexandria, the legislators hoped, would be "commodious for trade and navigation and tend greatly to the ease and advantage of the frontier inhabitants." Three years later, near the New Scotland settlement in Maryland, town promoters laid out Georgetown (which was spelled George Town on many early documents). Situated at the junction of an important north-south road and the Potomac River, the new town promised to become an important trading center.



A Hamburg village house, located at what is now 20th Street and New York Avenue, NW



Neither Alexandria nor Georgetown just happened. They were established for a particular purpose—to channel and take advantage of the immense trade that would probably develop on the Potomac River when the interior lands were settled. The new towns were planned; streets were laid out and lots surveyed in rectangular patterns. Public places such as market squares or tobacco warehouses were provided for; then the town promoters put the lots up for sale. Alexandria grew rapidly and by 1755 contained the impressive mansion of John Carlyle, the City Tavern, a courthouse, and several warehouses and wharves, along with shops and dwellings. Georgetown also developed in a promising way. Both of these ports suggested the urban potential of this location where the national capital would later rise.

Georgetown was laid out in 1751. This view of the waterfront gives several clues about what life was like in Georgetown in the early 1790s.

- *What do you think the people in the picture are doing? Compare the picture with the drawing from 1751, on page 11.*



Inside the Old Stone House, a museum on M Street, NW, in Georgetown

FOR REVIEW

1. Write one or two sentences describing how each of the following relates to the early history of the area that became the nation's capital. Be very specific.

John Smith	slavery
Nacotchtanke	plantation
Powhatan	tobacco
Tidewater Virginia	Georgetown

2. Compare the meaning of "indentured servitude" with "slavery." See if you can find at least three differences between them.

3. Describe the ways in which the Virginia Company made settlement in the Tidewater attractive to colonists.

4. Make a chart comparing the Indians, the English, and the Africans who lived in the Potomac region in the seventeenth century. The chart should include information regarding way of life, relationship to the land, and relations with each other.

BE CREATIVE

Imagine that you were living during the eighteenth century in the area that would become the nation's capital. One day you were walking in the woods and overheard an English settler and a slave having a conversation. Write a short play that includes their dialogue.

OR

Think of a natural geographic feature in your own neighborhood about which you would like to make up a legend. Relate your story to the Indian culture of Washington, and draw a picture of it.